



"THERE is really a vast difference," said Mr. Geo. Hastings, of this city, "between selling lumber to American dealers and to those in our own country. Here we sell everything on three months' time, and do a large amount of renewing for customers. An American firm never dreams of asking such terms. It is not an uncommon thing to receive back a cheque before the stock has actually reached the customer. There is a pleasure in cultivating a business of this character. But remember this, when you sell an American a certain class of goods, he wants that and nothing else. He is prompt and exact all around, and this is as it should be." In answer to the query, how is trade, Mr. Hastings reported it "quiet, though the outlook for the fall is fair, if the harvest turns out well."

"Lumber trade in New Brunswick," remarked Mr. R. B. Joyce, a former lumberer of that Province, and now located in Toronto, "is seriously affected by the competition of the Baltic. It is an export trade that the Province depends upon, and the cost of production has increased to that extent of late years, through increase of stumpage and other causes, that they cannot profitably cope with this outside rival. I wish it were otherwise, but I sometimes fear the best days of my old province have gone by."

I have heard of a Michigan lumberman, who has written to a friend in Canada, asking: "What in the old Harry the CANADA LUMBERMAN means by agitating this log question?" This hits my devoted head, and I wish my American friend to know that my hair is getting very thin about there. I have not done any agitating. My province is to give every one a show, and I have been letting the folks on both sides do their own talking. I must try and catch you, and get in your say, too. ELI is a free and independent elector, with no axe to grind; but he is dead anxious to further the interests of every lumberman.

I had a few words with Mr. Tennant, in his office on the esplanade, a week ago. He had just returned from the west, and reports a fairly active trade on the other side of the lines. "Yes," said he, "they have got over the labor troubles that threatened such dire disaster in the early spring. Prices are somewhat stiff. Good inch and half and two inch Canadian lumber is bringing \$3 a thousand more than a year ago." Mr. Tennant expressed the opinion that the reduction of the duty to \$1 a thousand had helped shipments to the States. One effect of the change, however, was to produce a scarcity of lumber here. Stocks just now were very low.

I have noticed in reading the news items of the LUMBERMAN that with few, if any exceptions, the shingle mills of this country are reported to be working day and night. Meeting a leading lumber merchant a few days since, I asked him to account for this. "It is owing," he said, "to the strong American demand for shingles. These people for some years past have been, to a large extent, using tin and galvanized roofs. Experience has proven to them, that these will not stand the weather, and they are now going back to shingles again. A 16 inch shingle is being used in most cases. Many lumbermen are cutting their rough logs into shingles and as they can sell them as fast as made, they get their money out of them at once. Prices I am glad to say are up a little."

"The flattening out of the real estate boom in the city," remarked Mr. Caldwell, manager for Messrs. Tennant & Co., lumber merchants, "has made local trade quiet. Real estate has tied up a good many people. Very little speculative building is going on to-day. The erection of small houses, such as was gone

into so largely a few years ago, is what created the demand for lumber. Iron and stone are chiefly used in the large buildings that are now going up in the city. Trade in the country is quiet, but we are looking for a good fall trade. Everything depends on the harvest. The farmers are the mainstay of our country towns. One bane of trade in Canada is the long credits. I have been trying for some time to get the lumbermen together in order that some arrangement could be effected that would end this kind of business. Think of such nonsense as the jobber paying out in cash freights on lumber shipped from the mills to some local customer here, and then taking the man's note for that which has been a straight disbursement on his part. And that kind of thing we are doing every day. The practice was started by a firm, who are to-day out of business, but it seems impossible to get any one back to sensible principles again." Mr. Caldwell reports that his firm are finding an increased demand for dressed lumber, and that they are having this work done at home, and to the satisfaction of customers, both as regards prices and character of work.

"Why should not the duty on hardwoods, as well as pine, be reduced to one dollar? asked the manager of McEachren Bros., lumber dealers of this city. "Our trade is nearly altogether in hardwoods and we find ourselves a good deal handicapped by the duty. We pay it of course and not the consumer. It comes out of our price."

You have been through the States lately was the suggestive enquiry of the interviewer.

"Yes," said he, "I was all through Florida, Tennessee, Virginia and other southern States the early part of the year. To me the weather was delightful. I saw lots of yellow pine and I can believe all I hear about its growing popularity. It is a handsome wood, and of great length. But about that duty on hardwood. There should be free trade in lumber of all kinds."

Doctors will differ and so will lumbermen. We may have before us the same data, but it does not follow that we will reach the same conclusions from that data. I tell elsewhere on this page of a consignment of twenty-five carloads of lumber to a real estate dealer in the city. A well-known lumberman relates how the circumstance struck him. We give his story. I mentioned the fact to lumberman John Donagh. His impression was that the possession of so large a quantity of lumber by one side of the lumbering business, told of a real estate dick, rather than its use for building operations by or for the owner. "There is a good deal of trading in real estate these days," said Mr. Donagh, "and I have known men in the city to acquire quantities of lumber taken in a real estate deal with some one in the country, who owned, or found it to his interest to control, some lumber." Either interpretation may be correct, and both are probably typical of actual transactions occurring at times. There is very little, from a jack knife to a load of lumber, that cannot be concerned in real estate these days. I know of teas, sugars, pictures, printing due bills, and the dear knows what else, that have played a part in the sale of a piece of property. Anything will count, if only the property can be influenced to change hands. So much for real estate.

I have seen a letter, addressed to the publisher of THE LUMBERMAN, from a wholesale lumber dealer across the border, asking, "how to get the address of lumber dealers or manufacturers in Montreal and Ottawa." The parties writing the letter are subscribers to THE LUMBERMAN, and an announcement from dealers in these places would, of course, come before their notice. Others would also see it, for I am informed, that the request is not an unusual one. The letter is naturally suggestive of advertising. THE LUMBERMAN has no cause to complain in this department—at least, as an onlooker, it strikes one this way; the fact that so many of the best firms in the country, especially those engaged in manufacturing, use its advertising pages regularly, and some most liberally, is an unmistakable compliment to the merits of the journal as an advertising medium. I have been struck,

however, with the paucity of advertising from lumber dealers themselves. They have lumber to sell. The CANADA LUMBERMAN covers the whole field in Canada, of value to those who sell lumber, and it has also a wide constituency across the border. How many carloads of lumber would a dealer require to sell to cover the cost of an attractive business announcement in these pages? It is evident from letters such as we have quoted above—and it is no single instance—that there are new customers to be had, if our dealers will only let them know that they are doing business. A nod to a blind horse etc.

"A large amount of property in this city," said Mr. Meaney, manager for R. Thompson & Co., lumber merchants, of Bay St., "is not paying more than 2 or 3 per cent. on the amount invested. Toronto wants about 50,000 more people to drop in here—and to do so at once. Building has been overdone, and it is because so many people are loaded up with real estate to-day, that collections are slow. Have you noticed in the case of recent failures, what a large part of the assets of many insolvents is made up of real estate? We are forced in settling up with customers very often, in order to protect ourselves, to take over property of one class and another. I suppose it is better to do this than to make a clean loss, but in most cases we will have to 'hold on' for sometime before we get our own back."

"I will tell you a funny thing that came under my notice a few days ago," continued Mr. Meaney. "I was signing the G.T.R. book in acknowledgment of an advice of a car load of lumber for our firm. I noticed the names of several other local firms for a carload each. Scanning the list more closely, I found a certain real estate dealer down for 25 car loads. We poor mortals could only buy one car load at a time; he bought in lots of twenty-five."

What significance do you attach to this? was the query. "It just means that speculative building in the city has reached a point where holders of real estate, who can manage it, find it necessary to hold even the lumber in their own hands, for the speculative builders are not in a position to command any credit. The owner of the land may be able to unload himself in part this way. If the builder can make anything beyond his wages all well and good. If not the other man takes no chances."

I found Mr. Meaney as I have found the lumber dealers generally loaded up on the question of long credits. "Take in the real facts," said he. "The lumberman starts into the woods with a lot of men. For cutting, logging, drives etc. he has got to put up spot cash, from the start. When the lumber is actually manufactured, it is a mistake and means a loss to sell it at once. Nearly two years go by from the time he starts to expend capital in its preparation for the market, before it is actually ready to sell. Then when it should be converted into cash, it is sold on three months time, and this credit is extended to the amount of one half by renewals."

Well remarked ELI no doubt you allow for all this in the profits.

"Yes we do," said Mr. Meaney with a quizzical smile. "Take bill stuff. It costs \$9 at the mill. The freight is \$2.75. We sell it for \$12 on time. Big profit, isn't it? And lots of margin for an occasional loss during the year. THE LUMBERMAN would be conferring a great boon on the trade, if it could do anything to get the dealers in this city together to talk over these matters in a common sense, business manner, as business men should always be able to do."

The venerable ELI, having his subject well in hand, was cruel enough to torture him with one more question before the interview closed. What about the duty that some folks are making a good deal of noise about?

"It has been a good thing for this section of country" was the response. "Our good lumber is worth \$5 a thousand more than it was a year ago. We can't credit all this to the duty, but it has had the effect of bringing the Americans over here and letting them see just what we have got, and in this way new trade has been created, and as a result of the increased demand has come increased prices. They have found that they can do better here than in Michigan."